



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Research shows even stronger evidence for breastfeeding benefits

*World Breastfeeding Week is August 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>*

**Eau Claire, WI, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018** –Over 800,000 lives could be saved every year if breastfeeding rates improve. Many diarrheal diseases and respiratory infections in children in low- and middle-income countries could be prevented. Breastfeeding also lowers the risk of mothers developing breast and ovarian cancer. If 90% of U.S. infants were fed only breastmilk for the first six months of life, the U.S. would save \$13 billion per year and more than 900 deaths could be prevented. Despite the strong health and economic benefits from breastfeeding, few children are exclusively breastfed until six months old.

In Wisconsin, 1 in 4 babies is fed only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a baby receives only breastmilk for the first six months of life and continue to breastfeed until at least two years of age.



“Breastfeeding helps keep babies healthy from the moment a baby first breastfeeds and the health benefits of breastfeeding last for a lifetime,” says Alexis Tuma, Public Health Nutritionist at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.

### Breastfeeding improves the health of infants, mothers, families and communities.

- Breastfeeding within the first hour of birth protects newborn babies from illness and infection.
- Children and adolescents who were breastfed as babies are less likely to be overweight or obese.
- Breastfeeding improves IQ, school readiness and attendance. It is also linked to a higher income as an adult.
- Breastfeeding also lowers the risk of chronic conditions later in life, such as obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, childhood asthma and childhood leukemia.

Breastfeeding is one of the simplest, most nutritious and cost-effective ways we have to give children the healthiest start in life. With support, encouragement and guidance for breastfeeding mothers, we can improve breastfeeding rates and give children the best possible start in life.

The Eau Claire City-County Health Department joins the Northwestern Wisconsin Breastfeeding Network and Chippewa County Public Health in celebrating World Breastfeeding Week. World Breastfeeding Week highlights the importance of breastfeeding for infants and children worldwide. ***Help us celebrate and support breastfeeding in our community on August 1<sup>st</sup>.***

**Join the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Walk to Support Breastfeeding**

**When:** Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> 5:45-6:30 pm

**Where:** River Prairie Park – Altoona



For questions about breastfeeding or how to support breastfeeding contact The Eau Claire City-County Health Department WIC Program at 715-839-5051 or visit: <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/departments/health-department/wic/breastfeeding-promotion-and-support>

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